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U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, is calling for a federal investigation into alleged suppression of a report detailing health threats to communities along the Great Lakes, including Waukegan.

Kirk said the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry initially refused to publish a government-funded report entitled "Public Health Implications of Hazardous Substances in the Twenty-Six U.S. Great Lakes Areas of Concern," citing scientific concerns with the document.

The Centers for Disease Control published the draft report last week following pressure from congressional leaders, Kirk said.

According to the 2007 draft report, of the more than 100 sites evaluated by Agency for Toxic Substances, two were considered "urgent public health hazards," 47 were "public health hazards" and 37 were "indeterminate public health hazards."

"As the representative for Waukegan, one of the United States' 26 Areas of Concern, I am deeply worried about the long-term health implications of pollution in the Great Lakes," Kirk said.

Kirk said the report shows elevated breast, lung and colon cancer occurrences, as well as heightened infant mortality, near many of the sites.

"According to the report, approximately 230,000 kids, seniors and mothers -- the most vulnerable segments of our population -- live within one mile of a contaminated water site," Kirk said.

"An Inspector General investigation should ensure that the Agency for Toxic Substances is not playing politics with the lives of thousands of families," he said.

In 2001, the International Joint Commission, which advises the U.S. and Canadian governments on the use and quality of boundary waters, requested that the Agency for Toxic Substances conduct a study regarding the public health impacts of the 26 "Areas of Concern" throughout the Great Lakes.

An Area of Concern is a region of water heavily degraded by hazardous waste.

Kirk said that in the 1970s and 1980s Outboard Marine Corp. dumped polychlorinated biphenyls into Waukegan Harbor, and that the harbor remains contaminated despite a program that removed about 90 percent of the pollution.

Kirk, a co-chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, has requested "an Inspector General investigation to determine whether the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry willfully suppressed a report detailing public health threats to children, seniors and pregnant women."